

Printed for consideration.]

Metropolitan Commissioners of Sewers.

SUGGESTIONS

FOR THE

EXECUTION OF HOUSE-DRAINAGE.

With reference to the rules and regulations to be observed by officers charged with the superintendence of house-drainage—which in a modified form have been approved by the Works Committee—it will have been seen that, in order to carry out the work with satisfaction, the necessity of an entire control both within and without the house will be involved.

It is evident to every officer practically acquainted with the work that unless this complete superintendence is insured, not only will the Court be perpetually troubled with that class of wilful obstructions of which the recent case of Mr Freeman is a fair specimen, but that entire failure of the system may safely be anticipated.

Much apprehension, however, exists, 1st. As to the enormous amount of increased labour and responsibility which will be thrown upon the Officers of the Commissioners by this service;

2ndly. As to the security for proper work, even with such control, unless the work itself be executed with a trained staff of artificers in the service of the Commission; and

3rdly. As to the opposition from householders and the whole class of operative builders to such restrictions and monopoly.

I would beg to suggest, for the consideration of the Works Committee, whether the greater part, if not the whole, of these difficulties may not be overcome by the adoption of a course already pursued in a smaller way by some of the water companies, which is found to work well, viz., to appoint, out of the class of respectable builders in each district, "authorised drain-layers," who would on all occasions be recommended by the Court for the execution of house-drainage to existing buildings within such districts.

Should this system be approved, it would probably be found beneficial in putting an end to the defective system which is now in progress, and to much doubt and uncertainty, if the intention of the Court to make such appointments were at once made known by public advertisement, together with the objects and regulations which they have in view in regard thereto; and I beg to submit the following suggestions for consideration upon this point:—

"That no drains whatever will be allowed communication with the public sewers which have not been rigidly examined by the appointed officer, and certified by him to have been laid in every respect in accordance with the rules of the Court.

"In order to protect householders from such disappointment, and from the trouble and expense of alteration, or removal of defective work, as well as from the extortionate charges to which they are sometimes subject, the Commissioners have it in contemplation to appoint 'authorised drain-layers' in each district, under such securities and regulations as will afford the best guarantee for the most efficient and economical execution of the works with the least trouble and inconvenience to the tenants.

"The authorised drain-layers will be selected from the most respectable builders of each District willing to enter into this arrangement with the Commissioners.

"On their admission and enrolment by the Court, the authorised drain-layers will enter into a written engagement rigidly to conform to the rules and regulations laid down in relation to house-drainage (under penalties for non-compliance), and to execute the work and maintain it in good order for a period of years (wilful damage excepted), at a fair and reasonable scale of prices to be fixed by the Court.

“ Householders will be invited to make complaint, on any reasonable ground for so doing; and should they have cause to be dissatisfied with the charges for the work, the accounts may be transmitted for examination by the Officer of the Commission.

“ Should any just complaint be made against any workman employed, the Court will have the power to dismiss him, and to prevent his employment on similar work for the future; and should a drain-layer at any time be found to have evaded or neglected the rules and regulations of the Court, or should any complaint be justified against him, either as to the works or the accounts, the penalties will be enforced; and on a repetition of the offence, his name will be removed from the list of authorised drain-layers, and public notice be given thereof by advertisement.”

The public having thus a complete guarantee for efficient work at the most moderate cost with security for its maintenance and good action for a period of years, it is reasonable to suppose that they would for the most part prefer employing such tradesmen to running the risk of failure and disappointment, at indefinite charges, by the employment of strangers and irresponsible workmen. The Commission would at the same time have every security which they could command in so large an undertaking that every portion of the work would, under the superintendence of efficient officers, be well and satisfactorily performed, and that other regulations would be strictly complied with.

(Signed) HENRY AUSTIN,
Consulting Engineer.

13th June, 1849.

Metropolitan Sewers.

SUGGESTIONS

FOR THE

EXECUTION OF HOUSE-DRAINAGE

JUNE 13TH, 184

(Signed) HENRY AUSTIN
Consulting Engineer.

LONDON